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A Word From Tim Downs - April 2012



Dear Friends,

It has always struck me that the rhythms of Conference life pulse to a different beat than those of the local church or even the liturgical calendar. Even as we move through Lent, a season during which many of our churches are focusing in new ways on spiritual disciplines, being more attentive to contemplative and prayerful aspects of our faith practices, we in the conference are setting in place the themes that will reflect our priorities for 2012.



We welcome to the staff Kimberly Knight, who will be our Director of Communications. Kimberly, who is a recent graduate of Candler School of Theology, and soon to be a member in discernment in the United Church of Christ, bring to this position gifts that will help us develop our social networking and further develop our web site. She is a member of Kirkwood United Church of Christ. Communication continues to be a challenge for us in the Southeast Conference and in these days during which the methods of communication are evolving rapidly, we are looking for new ways to reach people of all generations.

Debbie Spearman who is our Director of Financial Development has set a goal of completing the follow-up to our capital campaign to "transform churches and transform lives" by the end of this year. Further she is beginning to reach out to local churches to offer support with stewardship resources, financial development and mission interpretation. This work is particularly critical in 2012 given that in 2011 we saw a significant decline of \$10,000 in OCWM Basic Support from local churches. Gerri and I in the conference office are working to continue to cut our expenses, and have renegotiated contracts for services to achieve significant saving this year.

Kathy Clark and Sarah Kim are engaged in the challenging undertaking of launching the PATHWAYS project fully in the fall. We are pleased that they have raised \$95,000 for the year 2012 to do this. We have negotiated contracts with the Center for Progressive Renewal and Lancaster Seminary, are continuing to develop the curriculum and the administrative infrastructure of the program, and we are actively reaching out to other conference across the United Church of Christ to partner with them to bring PATHWAYS to those who are interested in developing multiple paths to authorized ministry in the UCC.

In the office we are beginning to focus on the upcoming Annual Meeting of the conference which will be held June 8th and 9th, hosted by First Congregational UCC, Birmingham. Details about this meeting will be in place soon, but now is the time to mark your calendars!

UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

UCC's Mission:1 receives DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Award

Mission:1 awarded "Best of Class" in the Public Relations, Advertising Campaign category during the Religion Communicators Council annual conference in Philadelphia.



All of these foci on the part of our staff represent our commitments to support the local churches of our conferences, develop leadership for the emerging church, and strengthen the bonds that hold us together. We look forward to your continued partnership as we build the UCC in the South.

Peace,

Tim Downs

Timothy C. Downs, Conference Minister

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FAVORITE LINKS

- Bridge 4 Faith
- The Center for Progressive Renewal
- United Church of Christ
- Mission Insite
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